service providers in order to make the market competitive and to provide telecom services at affordable rates. In India, spectrum is allotted to service providers based on national regulations and international practices subject to availability of spectrum.

(c) and (d) Defence services have released some amount of spectrum and they have been requested to release more spectrum for unimpeded growth of public mobile telecom services by shifting certain Defence wireless links between fixed locations to alternate media like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC)

Procurement of GSM handsets

2460. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the process adopted by Government for procuring the GSM handsets became a hindrance in the growth of subscriber base of BSNL cellular network; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. BSNL as a policy does not provide GSM handset to its subscribers and the subscribers are free to choose and procure GSM handset from open market.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Control over private courier services

†2461. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any law to have control on the operators of private courier services;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the manner in which it is controlled and whether Government would consider to formulate any rule to keep it under Government control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Section 4 of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 provides that the Central Government shall have the exclusive privilege of conveying by post, from one place to another, all letters with some exceptions and shall also have the exclusive privilege of performing all the incidental services of receiving, collecting, sending, dispatching and delivering all letters. Courier services are permitted through FIPB route to carry packages,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

parcels and other items which do not come within the ambit of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898. There is a proposal to amend the Indian Post office Act, 1898. The proposal *inter alia* envisages appointing of Mail Regulatory and Development Authority to regulate mail sector in the country. This proposal has, however, not been finalized.

Saving accounts in post offices

†2462. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of saving accounts in the post offices of the country as on 31st March, 2004 and the total number of operational accounts as on 30th June, 2007;

(b) the total deposits therein and the details thereof as on 31st March, 2004 and 30th June, 2007, separately; and

(c) the percentage of interest rate being given on the deposits of depositors in post offices and whether the proposal for increase therein in near future is under consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) (i) Total Number of saving accounts as on 31st March, 2004 were 14,42,10,145.

(ii) Total number of operational saving accounts as on 30th June, 2007 are not available. However these accounts as on 31st March, 2007 were 17,55,16,118.

(b) Total outstanding deposit in saving accounts as on 31st March, 2004 was Rs. 13367 crore.

(c) Total outstanding deposit in saving accounts as on 30th June, 2007 was Rs. 18599 crore.

(i) Current percentage of interest rate on deposits in different small saving schemes is as under:—

Name of Scheme	Rate of Interest
1	2
Post Office Saving Account	3.5%
Post Office Time Deposits	
1 Year	6.25%

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.